



King County
Department of Transportation
Metro Transit
Rideshare Operations
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Seattle, WA 98104-2628

King County Metro Vanpool Program Fare Increase Questions and Answers

Q. When will Vanpool fares increase?

A. New Vanpool fares take effect on January 1, 2005. This means bookkeepers start collecting the new fares for the month of January.

Q. Why are my Vanpool fares going up?

A. While Vanpool fares have not increased since 2000, the program's capital, operating and administrative costs have increased over the last four years. In addition to expected inflationary increases in some program costs, the cost of fuel, maintenance and insurance have increased more than expected.

Q. When was the last fare increase?

A. The last Vanpool fare increase was in April 2000 when fares increased an average of 18%.

Q. How much are the fares going up?

A. Vanpool Program fares will increase an average of 14%. On average, 8-, 11- and 12-passenger van fares increase 16%. Fares for 15-passenger vans increase an average of 11%. The actual increase for your group depends on van size and round trip miles. The Personal Use rate for all vans will also increase to 38 cents per mile on January 1, 2005.

Q. Will there be more fare increases in the future?

A. Additional fare increases are likely in 2007 and beyond, just to keep pace with inflation. Each year the amount of service, the quantity and cost of vans needed, operating costs and administrative costs are analyzed to determine if rider fares are sufficient to cover program costs and meet the fare recovery requirement.

Q. What does my fare cover?

A. The fare increase is necessary to cover program costs and comply with King County Ordinance. The Ordinance requires the Vanpool Program to recover 100% of its operating and capital costs and 25% of its administrative costs.

More specifically, your vanpool fare covers the cost of the vehicle, fuel, maintenance, insurance, emergency assistance and Vanpool support staff.

Q. How will the fare increase affect my bus pass?

A. A monthly Metro-Vanpool Transit Pass and the Ship-to-Shore Puget Pass will continue to be accepted at their current value towards a Metro Vanpool fare. All other Puget Passes are **not** accepted as payment towards a vanpool fare.

Q. How will the fare increase affect my employer-provided subsidy or pass?

A. The Vanpool Program will continue to accept subsidized vanpool fares through established FlexPass contracts with employers. Commuter Bonus Vouchers are accepted at their face value.

Q. How does the cost of vanpooling compare to driving alone?

A. The Automobile Association of America estimates the average cost to operate a vehicle is 13.1 cents per mile (includes only gas, oil, maintenance and tires). A 55-mile round-trip commute would cost you \$158.51 a month to drive alone while the same trip in a Metro Vanpool with 7 paying participants will cost you \$87.86. That's a savings of over \$70 a month and doesn't include any employer-provided subsidies you may be eligible for.

Q. How do I find out what my new fare will be?

A. Talk to your bookkeeper. Your bookkeeper received a 2005 fare schedule. Find your van size, round-trip mileage and number of paying participants in your group to determine your individual fare.

Q. What can we do as a vanpool group to minimize the impact of this fare increase?

A. Unless your vanpool is a 15-passenger van with 15 participants, you can reduce your fare by helping your vanpool add more riders. Visit RideshareOnline.com for a list of commuters looking to join a vanpool. Start a waiting list of riders to add to your vanpool. Your group can trade up to a larger size van and or merge with another vanpool at your worksite. The larger the van and the more paying participants it has, the lower the fare for everyone in the group.

Q. Who do I call if I still have questions?

A. Call your vanpool group's Accounting Vanpool Services Representative who will be happy to assist you. Please call 206-625-4500 or 1-800-427-8249 to be directed to the appropriate representative.